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09/817,978In the Claims:*Please amend the Claims as follows:*

1. (Currently amended) A memory associated with a programmable TV recorder storing computer readable instructions for programming a processor to monitor an input port capable of receiving a video signal from a video signal source, to determine whether ~~the~~ a settop box is operational and therefore the video source is recordable, and to generate an output when the processor determines that the video signal is not recordable.

2. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 1, wherein:

~~the video signal source comprises a settop box;~~

the programmable TV recorder further comprises means which communicate with a settop box provider; and

the output comprises an electronic message sent ~~to~~ the settop box provider indicating that the settop box is not operational.

3. (Original) The memory as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the video source comprises an antenna; and

the output comprises an alarm signal indicating that the programmable TV recorder is not receiving the video signal at the input port.

4. (Original) The memory as recited in claim 1, wherein the output is a signal which cancels a scheduled recording event.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim ~~5~~ 1, wherein:

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the processor is additionally programmed to determine that the video signal is recordable when the video signal, as analyzed by the processor, is changing.

7. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 5 1, wherein:

the processor is additionally programmed to determine that the video signal is recordable when a portion of the video signal in a video frame monitored by the processor changes with respect to the corresponding portion of the signal in another frame.

8. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 5 1, wherein:

the processor is additionally programmed to send at least one command signal to the video source and to determine that the video signal is recordable when the video signal monitored by the processor varies dynamically in response to the command signal.

9. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 5 1, wherein the processor is additionally programmed to determine that the video signal is recordable when the video signal received by the programmable TV recorder changes in a manner which is consistent with expected changes in a television program signal.

10. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 5 1, wherein the processor is additionally programmed to determine that the video signal is recordable when the video signal received by the programmable TV recorder changes in a manner which is consistent with expected ~~frame-to-frame~~ frame-to-frame changes in a television program video signal.

11. (Currently amended) The memory as recited in claim 5 1, wherein:

the processor monitors an audio signal associated with the video signal; and

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the processor is additionally programmed to determine that the video signal is recordable when the audio signal analyzed by the programmable recorder is not noise.

12. (Currently amended) A programmable recorder for recording video signals provided by a settop box, comprising:

monitoring circuitry, which monitors a signal indicative of the operational state of the settop box and generates a state signal;

means which determine whether the settop box is operational based on the state signal and generates a determination signal; and

control circuitry, which effects a programmed response in response to the determination signal, said response comprising at least transmitting an electronic message to a settop box control facility indicating that the settop box is not operational.

13. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein the programmed response additionally comprises cancellation of a scheduled recording event.

14. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the programmable recorder further comprises:

a communications circuit permitting ~~communication~~ said transmitting of said ~~between the programmable recorder and a settop box control facility; and~~

~~the programmed response comprises transmitting an~~ electronic message to said settop box control facility indicating that the settop box is not operational.

15. (Original) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the programmable recorder further comprises a sensor disposed proximate to the settop box;

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the signal is indicative of the on-off state of the settop box; and

the state signal indicates the on-off state of the settop box.

16. (Original) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises the video signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry monitors the video signal and generates the state signal when the video signal is present at an input terminal of the programmable recorder.

17. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises the video signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the video signal and generates the state signal when at least a portion of the video signal is changing.

18. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the signal indicative of the ~~states~~ state of the settop box comprises the video signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the video signal and generates the state signal when the video signal is consistent with the television program signal.

19. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises the video signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the video signal and generates the state signal when the selected portion of the video signal varies from ~~frame-to-frame~~ frame-to-frame.

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20. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:
the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises the video signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the video signal and generates the state signal when a selected portion of the video signal ~~is changes from frame-to-frame~~ frame-to-frame and the video signal is consistent with a television program signal.

21. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 12, wherein:
the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises the audio signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the audio and generates the state signal when the audio signal is present and varying in an expected manner.

22. (Currently amended) A programmable recorder for recording audio/video program signals provided by a settop box, comprising:

a communication circuit permitting transmissions of a command sequence from the programmable recorder to the settop box;

monitoring circuitry that monitors a signal indicative of the operational state of the settop box and generates a state signal;

means which determine whether the settop box is operational based on the state signal and generates a determination signal; and

control circuitry that effects a programmed response ~~in response to the~~ based on a negative determination signal, wherein:

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the means monitors the signal indicative of the output of the settop box responsive to the command sequence transmitted to the settop box from the programmable recorder to determine if the command sequence has restored the settop box to a responsive state.

23. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 22, wherein:

the signal indicative of the state of the settop box comprises a program signal output by the settop box; and

the monitoring circuitry ~~analyses~~ analyzes the video signal and generates the state signal when the program signal changes in response to the command sequence.

24. (Currently amended) A programmable recorder for recording video signals, comprising:

means for monitoring the video signals;

means for determining whether the video signal is recordable; and

means for generating a programmed response when the video signal is not recordable,

said programmed response comprising an electronic message sent from the programmable recorder to a settop box provider indicating an error in the settop box.

25. (Currently amended) The programmable recorder as recited in claim 24, wherein:

the programmed response additionally comprises cancellation of a scheduled recording event.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)